

Media Book

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## Media Release



UK // THEATRE **AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE** 

#### THE NICO PROJECT

#### **Maxine Peake & Sarah Frankcom**

One of pop culture's most original female artists, Nico has long remained one of its most enigmatic. In this Australian exclusive presentation of The Nico Project, performer Maxine Peake (Black Mirror, Shameless) and director Sarah Frankcom (Artistic Director of Manchester's Royal Exchange Theatre), alongside 15 female musicians from Australia and the UK, lead an exhilarating exploration into the world of female creativity and its devastating cost in a field dominated by men.

Inspired by the vocalist's stark, bleak and beautiful 1968 album The Marble Index, a highly regarded masterpiece of 1960s counterculture that was ignored on its original release, The Nico Project opens the line between Nico's potent imagination and us and commands from the shadows a figure who should never have been consigned to it.

After an early career as actor and muse for filmmakers such as Fellini and Warhol, German-born Christa Päffgen blazed onto the American music scene like a meteor.

Her 1967 debut with The Velvet Underground spawned one of rock's most enduring works, but rather than becoming devoured by the New York Arts scene she risked it all, shunned the limelight, and dedicated the years until her premature death just two decades later, creating a body of work that was pioneering and marginalised; but all hers.

Sharpened by text from the award-winning playwright EV Crowe and music by acclaimed composer Anna Clyne, The Nico Project is more than a tribute to a pop culture icon, it is a salute to one of the shaping forces of twentieth century counterculture.

Acclaimed British actor Maxine Peake has performed in many roles on the screen and stage from Hamlet to a quick witted lawyer in BBC series Silk and a 19th century matriarch in Mike Leigh's 2019 film Peterloo. The Nico Project will be performed exclusively at the Melbourne International Arts Festival in Australia following its premiere at the Manchester International Festival in July.

The Nico Project is commissioned by Melbourne International Arts Festival, Manchester International Festival and the Royal Court Theatre. Produced by Manchester International Festival.

'Peake [has a] capacity for emotional directness and a fierce, uncensored honesty - The Guardian on Hamlet

'Maxine Peake is captivating' - The Stage UK on Avalanche: A Love

\*\*\* 'Peake shows honesty and compassion' - The London Telegraph on Avalanche: A Love Story

'Peake keeps her audience mesmerized' - Culture Whisper on Avalanche: A Love Story

#### Arts Centre Melbourne, Playhouse 11-20 October

Tue - Sun, 7.30pm, Sat 19 Oct also 1pm 1 hour 10 minutes with interval Tickets from \$69

www.festival.melbourne Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183 #melbfest

Presenting Partner

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Funded by donations from the











## Media Release



AUSTRALIA // THEATRE WORLD PREMIERE

### **ANTHEM**

Andrew Bovell, Patricia Cornelius, Melissa Reeves, Christos Tsiolkas & Irine Vela

The long-awaited follow-up to one of Australian theatre's most acclaimed collaborations asks a bold question: does Australia share a dream; do we really sing with one voice?

Twenty one years ago, four playwrights and a composer came together to create *Who's Afraid of the Working Class?*, a series of powerful interwoven vignettes that captured the zeitgeist of Melbourne and Australia in the 90s.

To mark its 20 year anniversary, Arts Centre Melbourne commissioned the same team of some of Australia's greatest contemporary playwrights Andrew Bovell (*Things I Know to be True*), Patricia Cornelius (*SHIT*), Melissa Reeves (*Happy Ending*), Christos Tsiolkas (*The Slap*) and Irine Vela (*The Audition*) reunite to take the pulse of our nation today.

"When we came together for this collaboration it quickly emerged that we wanted to write a play that took class seriously, that took the destructiveness of inequality seriously; and we also wanted to write a play that was not safe," said Christos Tsiolkas.

What emerges is a portrait of a country unable to reconcile its past, uncertain of its future and political vision. The play takes the image of a train as its central metaphor, the meeting place for all the identities of the city with people coming together on their commute united by their common need to make ends meet. The colliding voices that make up this anthem might not always be in harmony, but they cannot be silenced.

Susie Dee (Love, SHIT) directs an extraordinary ensemble of performers and musicians to give voice to this important work. The diverse and multi-generational cast includes Amanda Ma, Maude Davey, Tony Nikolakopoulos, Eva Seymour, Carly Sheppard, Maria Mercedes, Reef Ireland, Thuso Lekwape, Osamah Sami, Eryn Jean Norvill, Sahil Saluja and Ruthy Kaisila.

Who's Afraid of the Working Class? was an ode to tiny struggles writ large; **Anthem** turns up the volume on the everyday injustices we choose not to hear.

'With intelligence, well-judged humour and the searching qualities of truly memorable theatre' – Sydney Morning Herald on Who's Afraid of the Working Class

'This is provocative, sometimes funny, sometimes uncomfortable theatre that stays with you long after the performance is over' – **Greenleft on Who's Afraid of the Working Class** 

#### Arts Centre Melbourne, Playhouse 1-6 October

Tue - Sat 7pm, Sun 5pm, Sat also 1pm 3 hours with interval Tickets from \$59

Auslan Interpreted and Audio Described performance

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
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This project was initiated by and presented with Arts Centre Melbourne. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Major Festivals Initiative, managed by the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, in association with the Confederation of Australian International Arts Festivals Inc., commissioned by Melbourne International Arts Festival, Arts Centre Melbourne, Sydney Festival and Perth Festival.

Produced by Performing Lines in association with Arts Centre Melbourne.



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This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Major Festivals Initiative, managed by the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, in association with the Confederation of Australian International Arts Festivals Inc., commissioned by Melbourne International Arts Festivals Inc., commissioned by Melbourne International Arts Festival, Arts Centre Melbourne, Sydney Festival and Perth Festival.







## Media Release



USA // THEATRE
AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

#### **GREY ROCK**

#### Amir Nizar Zuabi / Remote Theater Project

Fresh from its US premiere at Manhattan's legendary La MaMa theatre, Palestinian playwright Amir Nizar Zuabi's critically-acclaimed, intimate play **Grey Rock** provides a glimpse into the everyday lives of people whose very existence is often reduced to politics.

In a small village in the West Bank, a former TV repairman secretly builds a space shuttle to reach the moon. Without money or technology—but convinced that curiosity is stronger than gravity—Yusuf works passionately in the backyard shed. When Yusuf's family and friends discover this unimaginable project, things begin to fall apart.

**Grey Rock** is the spirit-lifting tale of someone with a mission and the community that rallies around their vision. As Yusuf's enthusiasm grows more and more infectious, the question becomes less about whether they can pull off this implausible feat and more about what it means when you're destined to lose but keep at it anyway.

Performed in English by Palestinian actors from Jenin, Ramallah, Haifa and Jerusalem including Khalifa Natour, Ivan Kevork Azazian, Fidaa Zaidan, Alaa Shehada, and Motaz Malhees, and all from different cultural backgrounds, **Grey Rock** is a refreshing view of humanity, as it follows stories of hope, grief, resilience and the power of DIY.

One of the leading theatre directors from the Middle East, Amir Nizar Zuabi first cut his teeth directing Stories Under Occupation for Al Kasabah theatre in Ramallah winning Best Production at the Cairo Theatre Festival and Cartage Festival. Since then, his work has been seen around the world including at the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, Royal Shakespeare Company, and the Young Vic Theater, London where he is an Associated Director. Zuabi is a member of UTI, and is currently developing plays for The National Theaters in Sweden and London.

'[Amir Nizar Zuabi] tackles the extraordinary' – The New York Times

'both infectious and bittersweet...' - Stagebiz

#### The Coopers Malthouse, Merlyn Theatre 9-12 October

Wed - Sat 7.30pm, Sat also 1pm 1 hour 30 minutes no interval Tickets from \$59

www.festival.melbourne #melbfest





## Media Release



**AUS // THEATRE** 

# THE SHADOW WHOSE PREY THE HUNTER BECOMES

**Back to Back Theatre** 

Australia's very own Back to Back Theatre return to Melbourne International Arts Festival with their brand new work, **The Shadow Whose Prey the Hunter Becomes**.

Focusing on five activists with intellectual disabilities who stage a public meeting, the performance captures a frank and open conversation about a history we would prefer not to know and a future fast veering out of our control. Their demands are not easy to swallow, but they will not be refused.

The ethics of mass food production, human rights, the social impact of automation and the projected dominance of artificial intelligence are here deftly woven into a hard-edged narrative that probes the unstable foundations upon which contemporary society is built. A theatrical revelation inspired by mistakes, misreadings, misleadings and misunderstanding, it is an unflinching reminder that none of us are self-sufficient and all of us are responsible.

Over the last 30 years, globally recognised Geelong-based Back to Back Theatre has created countless works that push the boundaries of theatre. Under artistic director Bruce Gladwin, the company has created a unique artistic voice in Australian theatre. The Back to Back ensemble is made up of Simon Laherty, Sarah Mainwaring, Scott Price, Mark Deans and Sonia Teuben, who are neurodivergent and/or disabled.

Following on from the success of Back to Back's previous Melbourne Festival performances including 2016's *Lady Eats Apple*, 2005's *small metal objects* and the game-changing 2011 masterpiece *Ganesh Versus the Third Reich*, **The Shadow Whose Prey the Hunter Becomes** will tour to the US directly after its Australian premiere.

'Sensuous, ambiguous... it's a masterpiece' – The Australian on Lady Eats Apple

'A vital sense-sharpening tonic for theatregoers who feel they've seen it all' – The New York Times on Ganesh

### Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio 9-20 October

Wed - Sat 7.30pm, Sat also 2.30pm, Sun 2.30pm 1 hour no interval Tickets from \$49







## Media Release



UK // THEATRE
AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

#### **ROOTS**

1927

English theatre company 1927 is renowned for fusing handcrafted animation, live music, cinema whilst playfully drawing on the fantastic, weird and darkly hilarious. The company's latest production, **roots**, builds upon a series of rarely told folktales that offer a glimpse into imaginations from a preindustrialised age.

In this Australian premiere, ogres, magical birds and very, very fat cats are brought to life with the company's signature style, set to a live score involved Peruvian prayer boxes, donkey jaws, violins and musical saws. This special performance considers the narratives of our forebears and how they might shape the stories of our future.

In 2008 the company left Melbourne audiences spellbound with Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, while 2010's The Animals and Children Took to the Streets won even more lifelong converts and most recently, wowing audiences co-creating Komische Oper Berlin and Barrie Kosky's 2019's Adelaide Festival performance of The Magic Flute.

Now, direct from its world premiere at Spoleto festival USA and a season at the Edinburgh International Festival, 1927 brings its latest coup-de-theatre to our shores.

A 1927, Edinburgh International Festival, HOME Manchester, Spoleto Festival USA and Theatre de la Ville Paris co-production.

'roots enchants on all levels— visually, musically, imaginatively'—Charleston City Paper

'roots blends live action, animation, video and music for a unique theatrical experience' – Post and Courier

'It is almost impossible to impart in words the magic of a 1927 show. A thrilling combination of animation, live performance, theatre and music...' – The Telegraph

### The Coopers Malthouse, Merlyn Theatre 3-6 October

Thu - Sat 7.30pm, Sat also 2pm, Sun 5pm 1 hour 10 minutes no interval Tickets from \$49

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
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Presenting Partner





## Media Release



**AUSTRALIA // THEATRE** 

# BLACK IS THE NEW WHITE

Nakkiah Lui

Australian satire **Black** is the **New White** arrives in Melbourne following two sell-out seasons in Sydney. Paige Rattray (*How to Rule the World*) directs an array of brilliant, unpredictable and loveable characters in this layer cake of racial politics, sexual tension, parental expectation and class privilege.

It's Christmas and Charlotte Gibson is in love. What better time for the fast-rising Aboriginal lawyer to introduce her large family to their fiance's own kin? There's the small problem of their respective fathers, but as it turns out, this holiday season everyone's getting a disaster of their own.

When the families come together for Christmas, the stage is set for a riotously funny struggle for dominance where insults fly, secrets come flooding out and sacred cows of all descriptions are mercilessly skewered.

Award-winning playwright and TV personality Nakkiah Lui has quickly confirmed her position as the preeminent new voice on the Australian stage.

'I wanted to present a family of Aboriginal people that hasn't been seen before in the Australian canon – not just in theatre, but in any form. That is, an Aboriginal family who have money, who are not oppressed but who are culturally quite strong. For me, that is quite similar to what I grew up with – a regular family who were political and culturally connected to their community,' said Lui.

This laugh-out-loud romantic comedy is complete with a cast played by Tony Briggs (Storm Boy), Luke Carroll (The Harp in the South), Vanessa Downing (How to Rule the World), Geoff Morrell (Please Like Me), Tuuli Narkle (Stolen), Melodie Reynolds-Diarra (The Man From Mukinupin), Tom Stokes (Romeo & Juliet – Bell Shakespeare), Miranda Tapsell (Top End Wedding) and Anthony Taufa (Saint Joan).

A Sydney Theatre Company Production. Presented in association with Melbourne Theatre Company.

'A refreshing take on sitcom tropes, this cinematic new play dishes out big social issues with a whole heap of goofball' — **The Guardian** 

★★★★ 'Nakkiah Lui serves a comic banquet' - Sydney Morning Herald

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner 2 October - 6 November

Mon & Tue 6.30pm, Wed - Sat 8pm, Wed also 1pm, Sat also 2pm 2 hours 30 minutes including interval

www.festival.melbourne
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A Sydney Theatre Company production



Presented in association with









## Media Release



SCOTLAND // THEATRE AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

# AT THE ILLUSIONIST'S TABLE

**Scott Silven** 

In an event that has floored jaws around the world, Scott Silven returns to Melbourne for the Australian premiere of his latest work, **At The Illusionist's Table** – a dinner and show experience like no other.

In this intimate and incredibly unique performance, the audience is seated at a long table adorned with stunning decorations in the gothic setting of Chapter House. Shortly after the audience is seated, host, mentalist and raconteur of impeccable taste Scott Silven appears.

While a meticulously curated and mouthwatering array of culinary extravagances arrive at the dinner table, Silven concocts a banquet of storytelling based on his childhood in Scotland - following a boy lost in the woodland who must call on every one of his senses to survive the forest's perils. These are dinner tales with a difference which will surprise as more otherworldly wonders delight and astound in equal measure.

Weaving magic, narrative and a rich insight into the human condition throughout the feast, Silven creates an experience bonding with the audience of 24 members, evoking each of their own senses along the way.

Following on from the success of previous Melbourne International Arts Festival works *Echo of the Shadow* (2016) and *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music* (2017), this critically acclaimed show with two sell out runs in New York and an extensive tour on the international stage, has turned even the most iron-clad sceptics into ardent admirers in the course of one decadent evening.

'Wow. Wow. '- The New York Times

'Silven is awe-inspiring' - Forbes

'a hands-down winner and one show that belongs on everyone's must-see list' – **Epoch Times** 

Alpha60, Chapter House
3-6, 8-13, 15-20 October
8pm
2 hours 10 minutes, no interval
Tickets \$399 includes three course dinner and drinks

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
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Presenting Partners

ALPHA60

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## Media Release



UK // THEATRE
AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

#### THE END OF EDDY

**Unicorn Theatre & Untitled Projects** 

Since it was published in France in 2014, Édouard Louis' coming of age story has reached close to half a million readers. Now the internationally acclaimed story is brought to life on stage in **The End of Eddy** in a collaboration between the UK's highly acclaimed Unicorn Theatre and Scotland's radical Untitled Projects in this Australian premiere for young audiences.

Édouard Louis was put on the international map at just 21 with this devastating true account of growing up gay and poor in rural France. The perpetual grey weather that hung over Eddy met its human counterparts in Eddy's alcoholic father, miserable mother, brooding half-brother and a school culture of bullying, homophobia and misogyny. Eddy's only option: to find a way out.

This adaptation of Louis' moving memoir is anything but deflating, however, created especially for younger audiences and mustering a theatrical and televisual arsenal to reclaim the joie de vivre every outsider deserves. Two performers play Eddy and every other character in this lovingly detailed story, while a quartet of mobile TV screens expand the narrative into new dimensions.

Director Stewart Laing crafts an intimate production, drawing the audience into the story of Louis' coming of age. Often manifesting a mischievous irreverence towards theatre conventions and tapping a profound vein of empathy, **The End of Eddy** draws out the universal themes inherent in this stunning autobiography to create something more.

**The End of Eddy** is a co-production between Scotland's pioneering Untitled Projects' team – visionary Scottish director Stewart Laing and writer Pamela Carter – and London's Unicorn Theatre, the UK's leading theatre for young audiences.

The show premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2018.

**The End of Eddy** is Based on the book *EN FINIR AVEC EDDY BELLEGUEULE* Copyright © 2014, Édouard Louis. All rights reserved. First published by Editions du Seuil in 2014

★★★★★ — Boyz Magazine, The Scotsman, The List, The Arts Desk

 $\star\star\star\star$  'Ground-breaking adaptation' – The Guardian

'At turns humorous, harrowing and, above all, hopeful' – Morning Star

The Coopers Malthouse, Merlyn Theatre 16-20 October

Wed - Sat 7.30pm, Sat also 2pm, Sun 3pm 1 hour 30 minutes, no interval Tickets from \$49 Suitable for ages 16+

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Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
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## Media Release



CANADA // THEATRE
AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

#### A BRIMFUL OF ASHA

Why Not Theatre & Richard Jordan Productions

Canadian actor, writer and director Ravi Jain stars alongside his mother Asha Jain in his hilarious autobiographical story of a son whose Indian-born parents want only the best for their kin.

When Ravi's parents discovered he wanted to be an entertainer, they rolled with the punches. But unmarried at 27? This will not stand. Derailing work, arranging prospective brides and exposing their son to unending bouts of humiliation are all just part of their job description. In this ring it's son versus mum. We don't like Ravi's odds.

This is the kind of battle only a deep love and affection can afford, and Ravi's mother Asha is a force of nature that will not be denied.

A Brimful of Asha is stuffed full of humour and insight as Ravi and Asha take to the stage — aided by copious tea and samosas - to spar over the supposed failure that is Ravi's life, delivering their respective takes on marriage and freedom, tradition and modernity.

Based in Toronto, Why Not Theatre has toured **A Brimful of Asha** across Canada, the US, and the UK, before making its
Australian premiere at the Melbourne International Arts Festival this October.

'pioneering in its intimacy, yet unapologetically heartwarming' – The New York Times

'This is theatre at its best—intimate, authentic, hilarious' — **Spotlight Toronto** 

'Very funny.... Somewhere in between the laughs, we come to understand at least some of the complexities, pressures and frustrations of this most personal of culture clashes' – **The London Telegraph** 

'Unbelievably believable' - British Theatre Guide

### The Coopers Malthouse, Beckett Theatre 9-13 October

Wed - Sat 7pm, Sat also 1pm, Sun 5pm 1 hour 30 minutes, no interval Tickets from \$59

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
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## Media Release



Southbank Theatre, The Lawler
12 October
2.30pm
3 hours with breaks
FREE

www.estival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
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**AUSTRALIA // THEATRE** 

# BLACKWRIGHTS SHOWCASE

**Ilbijerri Theatre Company** 

An ultra-blak invigoration station of deadly inspiration awaits featuring a selection of daring works from three fresh new scripts by cutting edge First Nations playwrights Monica Karo, Nazree Dickerson and Blayne Welsh.

Developed through Ilbijerri's BlackWrights Creators Program, an industry incubator empowering artists in the development of new First Nations theatre, this is a showcase of some of the leading writers of today.

The evening will feature a line-up of First Nations emerging talent over *kai kai* (fancy nibbles) and panel yarns with the writers, actors and Ilbijerri's Artistic Director Rachael Maza (winner of the Australia Council 2019 Award for Theatre).



## Media Release



CHINA // DANCE AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

#### **RITE OF SPRING**

**Yang Liping Contemporary Dance** 

China's renowned Yang Liping Contemporary Dance company returns to Melbourne in the Australian premiere of the visually spectacular **Rite of Spring**, following their captivating performance in 2017's critically acclaimed *Under Siege*.

Drawing on Tibetan concepts of the cycles of life and rebirth, the unity of humankind and the natural world, choreographer Yang Liping reunites with Oscar Award-winning designer Tim Yip in this extraordinary contemporary dance masterpiece, based on Igor Stravinsky's revolutionary ballet score of sacrifice and renewal, *The Rite of Spring*.

Yang's **Rite of Spring** is a full-length production featuring 15 dancers on Melbourne's State Theatre stage which will be filled with startling colour and images of striking beauty and strangeness, immersed with Eastern philosophy accompanying Yang Liping's elegant, dreamlike movement.

Constructed in three sections, the second section uses the original *Rite of Spring* by Igor Stravinsky, while the first and last section use a specially created new score from Chinese composer He Xuntian, inspired by traditional Tibetan music.

The three-part structure represents the Tibetan symbolic number of three being the first number that represents the notion of all. Covering themes of incantation, sacrifice and reincarnation, the work centres on the Peacock, a metaphor for beauty, purity and life and is also a personal physical embodiment for Yang throughout her career.

A household name in China where she is known as the 'Peacock Princess', Yang Liping has won huge international acclaim for her extravagant, breathtakingly visual dance works which blend Chinese aesthetics and modern expression.

'Visually striking...' - The Stage, UK

'Ambitious and avowedly spiritual' - The London Times

'Exquisite... an intoxicating experience' – The Australian on Under Siege

#### Arts Centre Melbourne, State Theatre 3-6 October

Thu - Sat 8pm, Sun 2pm 1 hour 15 minutes, no interval Tickets from \$59

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
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Asian Business Consortium









## Media Release



AUSTRALIA // DANCE WORLD PREMIERE

#### **TOKEN ARMIES**

**Chunky Move** 

When you enter an environment populated by varied lifeforms, animated machines and a set that itself seems to pulse and breathe, you know you're not in traditional dance territory. This visionary creation throws every rule to the wind, and is the first work created by Antony Hamilton since taking up the helm of Chunky Move.

**Token Armies** is a symphony of action, image and sound, and a collective experience through which audiences will make their own journey. Featuring a leviathan sculpture by Creature Technology Co. - the renowned creators of works such as *King Kong* and *Walking with Dinosaurs* - bio-mechanical forms that query the boundary between the living and the inanimate and an ensemble of 23 performers, this immersive spectacle explores the way labour becomes ritual and opens up opportunities for a future humanity.

Epic in scale, ambitious in conceit and utterly unforgettable in execution, this world premiere event is an evolutionary leap into an unknown tomorrow.

Chunky Move is Victoria's flagship dance company, and in its 24 years of existence has only had three artistic directors. **Token Armies** is a bold statement of the kind of work new artistic director Antony Hamilton champions: dance that goes beyond the boundaries of the individual body, making porous the barriers that divide humans from each other and the natural and artificial worlds in which we move.

'[Chunky Move] never does the same thing twice' - Herald Sun

'Chunky Move's unpredictable productions push boundaries and create challenges' - The Daily Telegraph

'It's cathartic, visceral and left the opening night crowd literally gasping' – Pedestrian TV on Forever and Ever by Antony Hamilton (Sydney Dance Company)

Meat Market 16-20 October

6pm & 8.30pm I hour 30 minutes, no interval Tickets \$59

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
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## Media Release



UK/ISRAEL // DANCE

#### **GRAND FINALE**

**Hofesh Shechter Company** 

Israeli-born, UK-based internationally celebrated choreographer Hofesh Shechter, one of contemporary dance's most electrifying luminaries, returns to our shores with his company's grandest work yet, **Grand Finale**.

As the world teeters on the brink of collapse, Shechter is here to preside over our imminent extinction. With his latest work featuring ten dancers on stage, the legendary choreographer conjures a frighteningly familiar spectre of a planet threatened by ecological and social disaster, and the people who must dance their way through the storm.

Spectacularly bold and ambitious, arresting in its imagery and riddled with moving honesty, this is dance that gazes into the abyss without blinking. **Grand Finale** is at once comic, bleak and beautiful, evoking a world at odds with itself, full of anarchic energy and violent comedy.

Melbourne's infatuation with choreographer Hofesh Shechter goes back a decade, when his 2009 Festival entries *Uprising* and *In your rooms* left audiences gasping for more. 2011's showcased the awe-inspiring *Political Mother* and 2013 saw the provocative and mesmerising *Sun*, but the years since have only whetted appetites for what comes next.

**Grand Finale** is replete with the intricate, ecstatic style that is Shechter's signature while maintaining a coy optimism in the face of chaos. Equal parts dance, theatre and live music gig and wholly original, this is a wild tour of the apocalypse that may await us.

\*\*\* 'Heart-stopping' - Financial Times

\*\*\*\* 'A wild waltz for the end of time ... [Grand Finale] ranks among Shechter's most sophisticated creations' – The Guardian

Arts Centre Melbourne, State Theatre 10-13 October

Thu - Sat 8pm, Sun 2pm 1 hour 40 minutes with interval Tickets from \$69

www.festival.melbourne

Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183 #melbfest

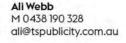
Presenting Partner



**Tatia Sloley** 

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## Media Release



**AUSTRALIA // DANCE** 

# HIGH PERFORMANCE PACKING TAPE

**Branch Nebula** 

**High Performance Packing Tape** is the OH&S nightmare that transforms everyday stationery and office consumables into the infrastructure of one person's physical ruin, brought to the Meat Market stage by one of Australia's most adventurous performance companies, Branch Nebula.

Performer Lee Wilson scales collapsing towers, hangs precariously from bridges unable to carry their weight and asks more of cheap materials than they're ever able to give. This performance truly invites the viewer to experience edge of the seat madness.

Pivoting deftly between visceral terror and the ridiculous, this masterclass in physical theatre needles at our desire for self-preservation and material wellbeing with a series of scenarios that each ratchet up the tension another notch. The sterile language of workplace safety, risk assessment and best practice is thrown to the wind, and though the suspense might be killing you, it's Wilson's neck that's on the line.

Branch Nebula's innovative, category-defying works have defined the bleeding edge of Australian contemporary performance for years, and **High Performance Packing Tape** showcases the high levels of collaboration, invention and technique that make this possible.

Wilson and Branch Nebula's co-director Mirabelle Wouters are joined by visual artist Mickie Quick and sound artist Phil Downing to create an immersive sensory world that places audiences deep in the action.

Presented by Melbourne International Arts Festival and Arts House.

'For a company committed to explorations of the nature of work and of play as art, High Performance Packing Tape represents a superb synthesis of these preoccupations and the apotheosis to date of Branch Nebula's creativity' – **Realtime** 

Meat Market 2-6 October Wed - Sat 8.30pm, Sun 7pm 1 hour no interval Tickets \$39

Audio described with tactile tour Friday 4 October.

<u>www.festival.melbourne</u> #melbfest





## Media Release



AUSTRALIA // DANCE

#### **OVERTURE**

Jo Lloyd

After wowing audiences and critics alike in 2018 with sell-out performances, leading dance artist Jo Lloyd returns to Arts House to perform her award winning work **OVERTURE**.

Based on Lloyd's childhood memories of pretending to interview famous people she'd like to meet, **OVERTURE** extends on this fantasy and is a dance that considers the unrequited, the unattainable and our attempts to connect with particular beings of obsession.

Lloyd's choreography moves gloriously on the precipices of the possible and unthinkable. Her performers shake, run, halt, throw limbs and memories out through the ends of their fingers, as they invoke lost heroes to play out impossible scenarios.

The original stimulus for **OVERTURE** came from Felix Mendelssohn's Concert Overture for Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It brought to light the story of the composer's sister Fanny, who was only permitted to shimmer a fraction of what she could. **OVERTURE** draws on Fanny's stories that were never shared, things never said and desires that were never fulfilled.

Jo Lloyd is a renowned Melbourne dance artist working with choreography as a social encounter. A graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, Lloyd has presented work in Japan, New York, Hong Kong, Dance Massive, Melbourne Festival, Biennale of Sydney and Liveworks.

**Tatia Sloley** 

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Presented by Melbourne International Arts Festival and Arts House.

★★★ 'A wild ballet' – The Age

★★★★ 'Beautiful chaos' - Herald Sun

'Overture is clever, tongue-in-cheek, brisk and timely' – Dance Informa

Arts House, North Melbourne Town Hall 2-6 October

Wed - Sat 7pm, Sun 4pm 50 minutes no interval Tickets \$39

<u>www.festival.melbourne</u> #melbfest



## Media Release



**AUSTRALIA // DANCE** 

#### **COLOSSUS**

**Stephanie Lake Company** 

With 50 dancers on stage, choreographer Stephanie Lake's latest work **Colossus** promises to be epic.

From darkness they emerge, a boundless mass of pulsating bodies. The push and pull of humanity is embodied by this heaving mass of life, but can a crowd be more than the sum of its parts? As complex patterns flow across this flood of figures the identity of dancer melts into anonymity, before a single movement fractures this fragile whole into chaos once more.

This riveting dance work explores the tensions between the individual and the collective, solitary striving and joyous union with a cast of 50 young dancers performing as one.

The monumental scale of this work is matched only by the outsized talents of the collaborators assembled to realise this bold production, and the sheer energy of Lake's dozens of performers brings an infectious edge bound to leave you changed.

In recent years Melbourne-based choreographer Stephanie Lake has cemented a reputation as one of the most exciting and prolific talents of their generation, and **Colossus** is Lake's biggest achievement in every sense.

Stephanie Lake is a multi-award winning Australian choreographer, director and dancer. Her major works including *Skeleton Tree, Pile of Bones, Double Blind, DUAL, Aorta, A Small Prometheus* and *Mix Tape* have been presented in esteemed festivals and venues around the world. Stephanie Lake is currently the recipient of the Australia Council Fellowship and a past recipient of the Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship.

'Stephanie Lake has danced with most of our best contemporary dance-makers and now... she's making a very strong bid to join them at the table' – **The Australian** 

★★★★★ 'Thrilling, frightening and entirely unforgettable' – Time Out

★★★★ 'Emotional and human' – The Age

### Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Theatre 3-6 October

Thu - Sun 7.30pm, Sat also 2.30pm 50 minutes no interval Tickets from \$39

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

Presenting Partner

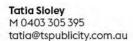


DA DANCING

With support







Ali Webb M 0438 190 328 ali@tspublicity.com.au





## Media Release



AUSTRALIA // DANCE

#### **SPLIT**

Lucy Guerin Inc.

Two dancers—one naked, one clothed—share the same space, but as room to move grows smaller and smaller the challenge of sharing a shrinking world grows ever more desperate.

Lucy Guerin's **Split** is both simple in conceit and brilliant in execution. The Melbourne-based choreographer plays with time and space to hypnotic effect, spinning from the movements of the two dancers a power struggle of desires and demands. Set to a driving soundtrack by electronic composer Scanner and performed by two of the most virtuosic dancers working in Australia today this is a gripping performance with deep resonances for a world in an ever-more precarious state.

A duet so fraught it verges on thriller territory, **Split** is the work of a modern master at the height of her powers. The work premiered to rapturous response as part of Melbourne's 2017 Dance Massive and has since toured locally and internationally to equally rave reviews.

Lucy Guerin Inc is an Australian contemporary dance company established in Melbourne in 2002 by artistic director Lucy Guerin. Renowned for creating original dance works and for the skill of its creative team, Lucy Guerin Inc regularly tours its works both nationally and internationally.

As one of Australia's leading choreographers, artistic director Lucy Guerin has been awarded the Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award, A New York Dance and Performance Award and several Green Room Awards as well as the Australia Council Award for Dance in 2016. Guerin has toured her work extensively in Europe, Asia and North America.

Presented by Melbourne International Arts Festival and Arts House.

 $\star\star\star\star1/2$  'Masterfully performed' – The Age

'Split is naked and clothed, formal and savage' – The New York Times

'Split remains riveting from beginning to end' – Dance Australia magazine

Meat Market 2-6 October

Wed - Sat 7pm, Sat also 2pm, Sun 5.30pm 50 minutes no interval Tickets \$39

www.festival.melbourne #melbfest







## Media Release



SCOTLAND // THEATRE AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

# WHAT GIRLS ARE MADE OF

Raw Material, Traverse Theatre Company & Regular Music

Real life teenage indie pop hopeful Cora Bissett stars in the Australian premiere of her coming-of-age gig-theatre memoir **What Girls Are Made Of.** 

Fresh from its tour of Europe and the United States with nonstop five star reviews along the way, the critically acclaimed performance with Raw Material and Traverse Theatre Company is based on Cora's meticulously detailed, pull-no-punches teenage diaries. This is the true story of Cora's rollercoaster journey from the girl she was to woman she wanted to be.

In a tiny corner of Scotland circa 1992, a restless teenager perusing the local paper came across those age-old words: Band Seeks Singer. What followed was a record deal that launched Cora's band Darlingheart into the stratosphere. In a matter of moments, its young members went from worrying about school concerts to touring with Radiohead and Blur.

Twenty-five years later Cora returns to the spotlight along with director Orla O'Loughlin with an arresting snapshot of youth blown to global proportions. Armed with Cora's self-maintained diaries and clippings hoarded by her father, **What Girls Are Made Of** tries to make sense of the waves they rode – both highs and lows. And now a mother, the legacy Cora leaves behind is all the more urgent.

Theatre rarely comes with a setlist like this. The live band on stage is studded with songs by the women that carried Cora's ambitions – from PJ to Patti to Dolly P – this cavorting portrait of a life well-lived is bound to inspire new generations to follow suit.

★★★★ A life-changing litany of pure joy' – The Herald

 $\star\star\star\star\star$  If you have a beating heart in your chest, there's a high chance it will make you weep' – The Stage

 $\star\star\star\star$  Euphoric, empowered, hard-won high' – The Telegraph

\*\*\*\* - The Skinny

The Famous Spie geltent, Arts Centre Forecourt 3-6, 9-13 October

Mon - Sat 7.30pm, Sat 12 Oct also 2pm, Sun 5pm 1 hour 30 minutes no interval Tickets from \$59























## Media Release



SCOTLAND // THEATRE AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

**WONDERS** 

**Scott Silven** 

Scott Silven isn't just one of the world's finest mentalists and illusionists – he's the rare sort of master who elevates his craft to the highest level of art. With **Wonders** he takes his audience on an intimate walk through the corridors of the mind, furnished by their own memories and lit by his keen and surprising insights.

From New York parlours to the salons of Paris, Silven has accrued a reputation as one of the smartest and most stylish young proponents of his mysterious profession. Now he comes to Melbourne to transform our grand old Spiegeltent into a site for impossible acts of apparent telepathy and uncanny prediction.

His audience might be composed of strangers, but in Silven's hands the invisible connections that bind us are made tangible, and secrets bubble to the surface in the most unexpected ways.

His feats might be the result of misdirection or sleight of hand, but there's a very real artistry that cuts beyond illusion to strike at the profoundest reaches of the human condition, telling us something about ourselves that isn't easily put into words.

The philosopher Descartes dubbed wonder the first of the passions, since all other desires stem from the hunger that wonder provokes. Prepare for an evening of ravenous mystery, then, that will supercharge your senses and set your mind alight.

'Silven is not to be missed' - Entertainment Weekly

'Astonishing' - Epoch Times

**The Famous Spiegeltent, Arts Centre Forecourt 5-6, 12-13, 19-20 October** Sat 5pm, Sun 2pm

1 hour 10 minutes no interval Tickets from \$59























## Media Release



AUSTRALIA // THEATRE

#### **GENDER EUPHORIA**

Mama Alto & Maude Davey

Cabaret icons Mama Alto and Maude Davey are joined by an ensemble of transgender legends to bring **Gender Euphoria** back to the Melbourne stage following a sold out Midsumma performance.

A salute to the long history of variety shows and a vision of the future of performance, **Gender Euphoria** brings together the biggest line-up of trans and gender-diverse performers ever to share a Melbourne stage including Amao Leota Lu, Miss Bailee Rose, Fury, Harvey Zeilinski, Mahla Bird, Mx Munro, Ned Dixon, Nevo Zisin and Quinn Eades in this new variety adventure.

In postmodern vaudeville style, Gender Euphoria captures song, dance, poetry, burlesque and variety for one night of utter fabulousness, in this joyous, binary-exploding celebration set in the beautiful setting of the famous Spiegeltent.

Gender Euphoria explores and celebrates gender diversity, gender identity and LGBTQIA+ especially the trans, gender-diverse and non-binary experience where emerging talents rub shoulders with some of our stage greats, and familiar faces show a new side to theatre. Humming beneath the laughter and delight is a sincerity and optimism that allows for real change and acknowledges the complex, messy humanity we all share.

Arts Centre Melbourne and Melbourne International Arts Festival presents Gender Euphoria.

**Gender Euphoria** was developed with the support of Arts Centre Melbourne, Midsumma Festival, Auspicious Arts Inc and Dancehouse.

The project has been assisted by the Australia Council for the Arts, Creative Victoria and City of Melbourne.

'Being a part of that audience was electrifying' — Witness Performance

'Joy, joy, joy!' - ArtsHub

The Famous Spiegeltent, Arts Centre Melbourne Forecourt 15-20 October

Tue - Sat 7.30pm, Sun 5pm 1 hour 15 minutes no interval Tickets from \$39























## Media Release



'...an emotionally satisfying, sonically uplifting, creatively validating record that would set the course for their career' – **Double J** 

Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall 3 & 4 October

8pm 1 hour 30 minutes no interval Tickets from \$99

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

US // MUSIC

#### THE FLAMING LIPS

#### The Soft Bulletin

It's been 20 years since **The Flaming Lips** released the one-of-a-kind aural hallucination that is *The Soft Bulletin*. As part of the 2019 Melbourne International Arts Festival, the band will perform the album in its entirety at Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne, on Thursday 3 and Friday 4 October.

There are few acts as distinctive and idiosyncratic as Oklahoma's The Flaming Lips, which is less of a rock band and more a perpetual motion machine flipping the finger to our expectations. But even in a 36-year career of constant self-reinvention, *The Soft Bulletin* stands out as a high point in musical innovation.

Its groundbreaking use of sonic manipulation combined with lush orchestration and complex harmonies left critics comparing it to The Beach Boys pioneering *Pet Sounds*, but there's little else that so successfully manages to combine radical experimentation with sheer earworm catchiness.

Led by charismatic frontman Wayne Coyne, this 20th anniversary concert will see *The Soft Bulletin* performed live by the Lips, featuring epic tracks such as *Race For The Prize*, *A Spoonful Weighs A Ton, Waiting for a Superman* and *Feeling Yourself Disintegrate*, that explore the connection between hero journeys and the daily struggles of human life.

And given the band's penchant for performances as unexpected as their songs, we're ready for anything.

Tatia Slolev

M 0403 305 395



## Media Release



UK // MUSIC

#### **NITIN SAWHNEY**

**Beyond Skin** 

Twenty years ago, UK musician and composer **Nitin Sawhney** strode onto the international stage with his seminal album *Beyond Skin*, scoring a Mercury Prize nomination and international acclaim along the way.

On the anniversary of its release, this bold cocktail of urban triphop and electronica, global flavours and provocative sampling proves as urgent in its politics and original in its composition as ever before. In this special one-night-only Melbourne Festival performance, Sawhney will perform *Beyond Skin* in its entirety.

As a composer, producer and musician, Sawhney is a recipient of over twenty international awards as well as a CBE, an Ivor Novello Lifetime Achievement award, 6 independent honorary doctorates and has scored approximately sixty films including most recently *Mowgli* for Netflix, and numerous television shows including BBC's epic *Human Planet* series. Sawhney has also made over twenty studio albums - eleven under his own name - and has also scored extensively for theatre, dance and video games.

Beyond Skin was Sawhney's fourth album but represented a stellar leap, weaving together deft electronica, compelling vocal arrangements, lush orchestration and the distinct rhythms of his parent's native India. More than a collection of songs, it is a coherent artistic statement that cut through the chaos to resonate with listeners the world over.

Twenty years on, and with an illustrious career that covers all creative mediums, Nitin Sawhney returns to the work with a live performance that reminds us how a staggering range of voice and instruments can give birth to moving harmonies that rise as one.

'Beyond Skin is movingly anti-sentimental, political without being polemical. Beyond stereotype, and careening close to sublime.' - NME

Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall Sun 20 October 8pm 1 hour 30 minutes no interval Tickets from \$59







## Media Release



Melbourne Recital Centre
Thu 10 October
8pm
1 hour 30 minutes no interval
Tickets from \$59

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

US // MUSIC

## JOAN AS POLICEWOMAN

New York's Joan Wasser is the one police officer whose tickets you want to get your hands on. The last time she played in Melbourne people were doing anything to get into the sold out gig, and this rare solo performance will be an even hotter item.

To launch her new three-disc extravaganza *Joanthology*, **Joan as Police Woman** will play an intimate solo concert that strips away the trimmings to reveal the essence of her incredible songwriting.

Six studio albums and more than 1000 live performances have seen Joan honing her craft to perfection, and the peers who have sought her out for collaborations include the likes of Lou Reed, Rufus Wainwright, ANOHNI and John Cale.

Within the acoustically sublime Melbourne Recital Centre, Joan will perform her songbook on piano and guitar, affording her many fans the event they've longed to hear.



## Media Release



★★★★ 'utterly convincing' – Financial Times 'mesmerising and refined, intertwining sensations of flight and diving in deep waters' - Le Monde

**Melbourne Recital Centre** Sat 19 October

8pm 1 hour 15 minutes no interval Tickets \$69

www.festival.melbourne Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183 #melbfest

AUSTRALIA / UK / INDONESIA // MUSIC

#### **GHOST GAMELAN**

#### Susheela Raman

What do Erik Satie, Sonic Youth, Philip Glass and Miles Davis share? A fascination inspired by gamelan, the Indonesian musical tradition of shimmering, looping resonance whose DNA has made its way into everything from modal jazz to electronic dance music.

British/Australian singer Susheela Raman's creative journey has embraced the diverse: from Byzantine chant, post-punk art-pop and ecstatic Pakistani Qawwali to the South Indian music her parents gifted her.

For **Ghost Gamelan** Raman and longtime co-writer and guitarist Sam Mills travelled to Indonesia to transform their songs with contemporary Javanese gamelan composer Gondrong Gunarto. It's a haunting combination. With its compulsive rhythms and otherworldly harmonies, Ghost Gamelan is full of ancient echoes but achieves something unique, thrilling and contemporary.

**Tatia Sloley** 

M 0403 305 395



## Media Release



US // MUSIC

'The most talked-about jazz musician in recent memory' —  $\mathbf{Rolling}$  Stone

'The best way to experience the cleanse and burn of Kamasi Washington's music is live' – The New York Times

Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall Tue 8 October 8pm 1 hour no interval

Tickets from \$79

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

#### KAMASI WASHINGTON

Some musicians blaze a trail so fiercely that others get caught up in the slipstream. **Kamasi Washington** is one, and there's nothing left unchanged by his touch.

Washington polished his craft playing session musician for artists ranging from Herbie Hancock to Snoop Dogg, but it was his work on Kendrick Lamar's *To Pimp a Butterfly* that saw him really turn heads.

When he turned to composing, producing and performing with his own band, that promise erupted with a force beyond anyone's imagining. His fertile, expansive style of jazz might have roots in Coltrane, Davis and Sun Ra, but equally rips chunks of inspiration from Afrobeat, trance, electronica and soul.

**Tatia Sloley** 

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Intricate solos spill out into sweeping orchestration of a cinematic scale, conjuring vistas of an Afrofuturist utopia hovering on the horizon.



## Media Release



US // MUSIC AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

# A THOUSAND THOUGHTS

A live documentary with the Kronos Quartet Sam Green & Joe Bini

The Kronos Quartet might be one of the world's most recognisable musical groups, but you've never experienced them like this before. See these modern icons enter a new dimension as a documentary feature devoted to Kronos is scored live by its own subjects.

Filmmaker Sam Green conceived of **A Thousand Thoughts** as a 'live documentary', in which interviews and archival footage are accompanied by live performance by Kronos and live narration by Green. The result is both a wide-ranging and thoughtful exploration of a 45-year-old music institution, and a palpable reminder why this San Francisco-based string quartet remains at the forefront of their field.

Kronos Quartet's catalogue defies easy categorisation, ranging from new music and contemporary classical to territory as far off as tango and Mexican folk. Prolific collaborators, the group has performed with the likes of David Bowie, Laurie Anderson and Tom Waits and have created soundtracks to films such as *Dracula* and *Requiem for a Dream*. Don't miss this tribute to these veritable musical stars that will woo newcomers and reward old fans alike.

'As magical an amalgamation as anything you can imagine' — Los Angeles Times

'Mindblowing ... A truly moving sensurround experience.' – **Newsweek** 

Melbourne Recital Centre, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Hall 13 & 14 October

7pm 1 hour 25 minutes, no interval Tickets from \$79

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

Presenting Partners



Commissioning Circle Kronos Quartet Giving Circle With support from











## Media Release



'Universal, all-encompassing and fabulously inclusive' – The Globe and Mail

**Toorak Uniting Church, Kinross Arts Centre Sat 12 October** 

2pm 1 hour no interval Tickets from \$79

<u>www.festival.melbourne</u>
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbest

US // MUSIC

# AROUND THE WORLD WITH KRONOS

**Kronos Quartet** 

To complement the live screening of *A Thousand Thoughts*, Kronos Quartet will play an eclectic and family-friendly show.

The lively and beguiling program includes traditional and contemporary works from every corner of the globe, each arranged to cast new light on these sometimes familiar, always riveting compositions.

No matter what music they're playing, you know this worldrenowned ensemble will deliver something to enlighten and entertain.

With support from



**Tatia Sloley** 

M 0403 305 395









## Media Release



'Andonovska's charged, athletic performance keeps the entire audience on the edge of their seats' - RealTime

Melbourne Recital Centre, Primrose Potter Salon Fri 18 October

7pm 1 hour no interval Tickets \$39

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

**AUSTRALIA // MUSIC** 

#### **LINA ANDONOVSKA**

Curiosity, fearlessness and versatility carry Australian flautist Lina Andonovska's artistry around the globe, and she returns here to home soil with a performance that will invoke a staggering range of musical contrasts and demands on the performer.

With a program featuring Brett Dean's *Demons* (2004), John Fonville's *Music for Sarah* (1995), Jennifer Higdon's *Rapid Fire* (1992), and Donnacha Dennehy's *Bridget* (2019) audiences will be quick to see why Andonovska is a rare breed in the flute world.

A name that you'll discover on both the pages of *Rolling Stone* and the Australian Chamber Orchestra roster, she has not only cultivated creative partnerships with leading composers including Louis Andriessen, Thomas Adès and Bryce Dessner (The National), but also deep community ties from Timor Leste to Tokyo's incubator Wonder Site.

Here we reveal a solo voice surveying the peaks of contemporary composition, culminating with the world premiere of Donnacha Dennehy's *Bridget*: a work commissioned by Andonovska based on repetition, accumulation and manipulation of layering inherent in the works of British visual artist Bridget Riley.







## Media Release



'Obscure, forward thinking and with a distinct flavour' — **Everything is Noise** 

The Substation 16 - 18 October 8pm 1 hour no interval Tickets \$39

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

JAPAN // MUSIC AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

#### **KUKANGENDAI**

The contrarians that make up Japanese trio **Kukangendai** never met a musical convention they couldn't break. Wielding the humble rock fundamentals of guitar, bass and drums, they tear apart the very basics of music to create something shocking yet compulsive, crazy-making but true.

The three-piece formed in 2006 and have since developed a unique approach to creating tracks through a process of deliberate error and recording glitches replicated live.

Tearing up the rulebook on melody, tempo and harmony results in distorted, mind-bending sonic voyages that have drawn attention the world over. In recent years the band have collaborated with such luminaries as Ryuichi Sakamoto releasing an album in 2018 titled Zureru, while their most recent LP was released on the label of Sun O)))'s Stephen O'Malley.

With a reputation for live experiences as humorous as they are profound—what else do you expect when you write unplayable music?—the Australian debut of **Kukangendai** will leave heads spinning.

Presented with the Japan Foundation.

Presented with



**Tatia Sloley** 

M 0403 305 395







## Media Release



AUSTRALIA // MUSIC WORLD PREMIERE

#### **EVERYWHEN**

#### **Matthias Schack-Arnott**

Melbourne-based percussive artist Matthias Schack-Arnott has carved out a unique space in contemporary music-making, developing entirely new instrumental set-ups and collaborating with thinkers from fields as diverse as architecture and engineering.

In this world premiere performance he collaborates with designer Keith Tucker of Megafun to create an immersive rotational lighting system to make his latest work even more otherworldly. A constantly shifting canopy of sound evoking ritual geometries, subatomic motion and planetary orbits, **Everywhen** is music from outside of time.

A lone performer is surrounded by dozens of objects in perpetual motion. From the tiny to the massive, this whirlpool of floating sounds forms a percussive swarm of gongs and chimes, while concentric circles of organic matter accumulate below. This teeming turbulence gives rise to a dizzying aural experience revealing the power of cyclic motion in sound.

Matthias Schack-Arnott is an award-winning Melbourne based percussive artist working at the intersection between kinetics, new media and sound. He has won numerous awards, including the 2016 Melbourne Prize for Music 'Development' Award, and multiple Australian Art Music Awards for his work with Speak Percussion.

**Tatia Sloley** 

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As a guest artist Matthias appears with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Malaysia Philharmonic Orchestra, Exo-Tech, ELISION, and Australian Art Orchestra.

'Sonically and visually exquisite' - The Guardian

'Virtuosic' - The Wire

The Substation 10-13 October Thu - Sat 8pm, Sun 4pm 50 minutes no interval Tickets \$39





## Media Release



AUSTRALIA // MUSIC WORLD PREMIERE

#### **DIASPORA**

**Chamber Made + Robin Fox** 

A digital fever dream made manifest, this world premiere Chamber Made work by local sound-and-light pioneer Robin Fox and collaborators dares to imagine a transhuman tomorrow where software enables the promise of utopia.

**Diaspora** is inspired in part by the dizzying concepts of Australian author Greg Egan's legendary science fiction masterpiece of the same name, which imagines a distant future in which minds and machines have long been merged. Rather than fearing technology as the bringer of impending catastrophe, Fox and collaborators consider the shimmering possibility that becoming software could not only save our species from extinction but offer a beautiful moment of evolution towards an ethereal, non-body consciousness.

Projection, illusions and sense-defying lasers carve out a truly futuristic design space to house the ensemble of extraordinary musicians tasked with making audible the creation of a digital life-form.

A visual symphony for machines, violin, voice, ondes musicales, theremin and laser, this astonishing project brings together some of today's finest creative minds **including Tamara Saulwick Errki Veltheim, Madeleine Flynn, Georgie Darvidis and Nick Roux** to imagine a mind that is yet to come.

**Tatia Sloley** 

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Presented in association with The SUBSTATION.

The project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and the Besen Family Foundation.

'Inspiring, surprising and thought-provoking' — ArtsHub on Chamber Made

'Visually stunning' - The New York Times on Robin Fox

### The SUBSTATION 3-6 October

Thu - Sat 8pm, Sat also 2pm, Sun 2pm 1 hour no interval Tickets \$39





## Media Release



Melbourne Recital Centre 12 & 15 October

7pm 1 hour 40 minutes with interval Tickets from \$58

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

AUSTRALIA // MUSIC AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

#### **NEVERMIND**

Musica Viva

This is early music for the twenty-first century.

When the four French musicians of **Nevermind** met while studying in Paris, a shared passion for the Baroque and traditional chamber music quickly blossomed into an ambitious plan. Armed with flute, violin, viola da gamba and harpsichord, they set about rewriting the rulebook on period-instrument concerts and throwing open the windows to clear the dust from some of history's most impressive music.

With a thoroughly engaging mix of virtuoso expertise and unpretentious charm, in just a few years **Nevermind** has had audiences across Europe and the US pricking up their ears. Their first album *Conversations* drew fresh attention to the often overlooked French composers Jean-Baptiste Quentin and Louis-Gabriel Guillemain, while live performances continue to showcase their youthful relish for fine music.

Presented by Musica Viva, this will be the group's Australian debut, the beginning of a long love affair.





## Media Release



**AUSTRALIA // MUSIC** 

'Clever and sensitive interplays of harmony, tone, timing shifts and to-the-millisecond accuracy' – The Adelaide Review

#### Melbourne Recital Centre, Elisabeth Murdoch Hall Thu 17 October

7.30pm 1 hour no interval Tickets \$50

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

#### **STALIN'S PIANO**

#### Sonya Lifschitz

The formidable pianist Maria Yudina was one of the most outspoken critics of Joseph Stalin's tyranny, and for her efforts was banned, suspended and exiled again and again. But when the dictator was found dead in his bedroom, it was Yudina who was spinning on his record player.

Pianist Sonya Lifschitz takes to the piano at the heart of this electrifying new work, conceived by Australian composer Robert Davidson with and for the Ukranian-born Lifschitz. Davidson's bracing and brilliant compositions here are performed with virtuosic talent, but spiralling out from them is an audio-visual epic that charts a maelstrom of history, politics, art and rebellion.

Sewing together recorded audio, archival footage and live voice, a panoply of historical figures hover above the stage: Goebbels, Ai Wei Wei, Jackson Pollock, Whitlam, Judith Wright, Stalin and Yudina herself. From Bertolt Brecht facing the House of Un-American Activities Commission to JFK, Whitlam, Gillard and Trump, more than a century of political and creative thought is put to scrutiny, arranged and rearranged in provocative and insightful layers.

This powerful and affecting work is an accelerating ride through some of the biggest themes in contemporary history, and a chance to reimagine the world in which we find ourselves today.

**Tatia Sloley** 

M 0403 305 395



## Media Release



Various October 2019 - August 2020 FREE

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

**AUSTRALIA // VISUAL ARTS** 

# MELBOURNE ART TRAMS

Melbourne's grandest festival is indelibly linked with one of its most visible expressions: the annual transformation of trams into moving canvases proudly wearing some of our most arresting artworks. Welcoming all comers and weaving their way through the city, these trams are as much a part of Melbourne's fabric as Melbourne International Arts Festival itself.

Melbourne Art Trams takes as its inspiration the original Transporting Art project, which from 1978 to 1993 saw iconic local artists the likes of Mirka Mora, Howard Arkley and Reg Mombassa transforming W-class trams with their vivid art.

Melbourne Festival reignited this spark in 2013 and ever since has been inviting artists to submit their ideas for rich and illuminating new designs.

Each year the festival commissions eight of these creative minds to make over a tram, with one given to a recreation of an original Transporting Art work. This year that entry will be inspired by Lesley Dumbrell's 1986 tram, which represents the power of the electricity that moves the vehicle and characterises the energy, creativity and optimism that infused all aspects of the 1980s in Melbourne.

Presented with











Ali Webb M 0438 190 328 ali@tspublicity.com.au





## Media Release



UK // VISUAL ARTS AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

'A riveting sonic adventure' - The Guardian

'Minimalist art, 70s club culture, experimental music composition, and all manner of electrical and auditory geekery' – The New Yorker

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA)

14 September - 17 November

Free

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

#### **HAROON MIRZA**

Every year the ACCA International brings to Melbourne an artist at a pivotal point in their career, and in 2019 internationally acclaimed London-based **Haroon Mirza** will be presented in Australia for the first time.

Mirza's early career was as a DJ, and his vast artistic practice has echoed out in ripples from those origins in music. From sculptural assemblages to immersive installations and live performances, Mirza's raw tools are the acoustics that surround us. He describes his role as that of a composer, scoring symphonies for furniture, video footage, household electronics and electricity, and his recent works have probed fields as far flung as design, theology, particle physics and neuroscience.

In less than a decade Mirza has accumulated some of the most prestigious prizes in the art world: a Silver Lion for Most Promising Artists at the 2011 Venice Biennale, the Zurich Art Prize and Nam June Paik Art Centre Award in 2014, and the Calder Prize in 2015.

This new commission for Melbourne International Arts Festival will showcase the experimental, open-ended and collaborative nature of his current practice, reimagining ACCA's vast architecture as an echo chamber in which a disparate body of works will come together to form a conceptual and sonic whole. With local and international collaborators invited to present their own original contributions, Mirza will redefine how this iconic Melbourne space looks, sounds, and ultimately means to those who wander it.

**Tatia Sloley** 

M 0403 305 395





## Media Release



GERMANY/MEXICO // VISUAL ARTS WORLD PREMIERE

The exhibition is touring to Pivo in Brazil in 2020 and has been supported by the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen.

'Castillo Deball's richly presented objects radiate contextual strata fused with visual depth and discovery' – **Sculpture Magazine** 

Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA) 5 October - 7 December FREE

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

# MARIANA CASTILLO DEBALL

**Replaying Life's Tape** 

Some artists take a long view of history, but few cast their gaze as far as **Mariana Castillo Deball**. Her canvas is deep time, often drawing on the practices of Western sciences such as anthropology, archaeology and paleontology to reconfigure our understanding of history and our place within it.

For her first Australian exhibition she expands this methodology even further, to the distant prehistoric past that still resides beneath our feet.

An area north of Adelaide is home to recently discovered fossils that resulted in the naming of an entirely new period in our planet's geological history, the Ediacaran Period. In 2018 Castillo Deball undertook a site visit to the Ediacara Hills to document the sandstone-based impressions, using techniques to capture images often more readable than the fossils themselves.

For her new project at MUMA, curated by Hannah Mathews, Castillo Deball drills a wormhole through time to this unimaginably far off era, combining objects and viewing technologies to unearth new understandings of history, site and life itself. The recent discovery of an organic pigment extracted from fossils related to the Ediacaran Period — a hot pink that is now the world's oldest colour — will also play a role in Castillo Deball's new work.

M 0403 305 395





## Media Release



**Gertrude Contemporary 5 October - 9 November** FREE

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

INTERNATIONAL // VISUAL ARTS WORLD PREMIERE

#### **HOPE DIES LAST**

#### Art at the end of optimism

What's the use of art when humanity's prospects are bleaker than the imagination can handle? This provocative exhibition charges Australian and international artists with a hefty demand: what happens when our stores of optimism run dry? What will the end of days look like without hope, and what is there to grasp onto when all else crumbles to dust?

Mortality, extinction, suffering and failure are the fuel driving this challenging and strange exhibition of curated works, presented across the two sites of Gertrude Contemporary and the Margaret Lawrence Gallery at the Victorian College of the Arts.

Featuring leading artists from Australia and abroad, the works here address some of the most difficult yet urgent questions of our time, responding with gallows humour, the condemned's resignation and the camaraderie of the trenches to the dark hours that await. **Hope Dies Last** will be one of the most depressing events of the year, an exhibition that will riddle us with sadness, and likely leave us more pessimistic than we have ever been before. Bring a loved one if you care, but know that we all arrive at the final exit alone.



## Media Release



Anna Schwartz Gallery
5 October - 21 December
FREE
www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

INTERNATIONAL // VISUAL ARTS AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

# NEVER THE SAME RIVER

**Never the same river** is an exhibition of works of art across timeframes, acknowledging that the ways in which artists engage ideas and produce work does not necessarily follow a linear path.

The exhibition draws from the histories of four galleries—Melbourne's United Artists (1982—1988), City Gallery (1988—1993) and Anna Schwartz Gallery, in both Melbourne (1993—present) and Sydney (2008—2015).

**Never the same river** will be designed in collaboration with Denton Corker Marshall, the architects who designed the gallery at 185 Flinders Lane in 1993.

Spanning the 1980s to the present, the exhibition elaborates the themes, ideas, beliefs, and passions that have motivated the artists in their struggle to work within and against established conventions. Many works directly engage the political and social contexts of their time, and are redefined by the present tense.

**Tatia Sloley** 

M 0403 305 395





## Media Release



JAPAN // VISUAL ARTS AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE 'Magical, dramatic and otherworldly digital art' - Forbes

Tolarno Galleries Level 4, 104 Exhibition Street, Melbourne VIC 3000 5 October - 2 November Free

www.festival.melbourne #melbfest

#### **TEAMLAB**

#### **Reversable Rotation**

There aren't many art collectives whose members include mathematicians, architects, CG animators and engineers, but trying to pin down the ultra-technologists of **teamLab** is like asking the ocean to hold still. From their frenetic hive of a base in Tokyo this sprawling assembly of thinkers and dreamers create immersive works of breathtaking imagination — sculptures of light whose radiance seems to pass through your very body.

Given how intensely **teamLab** works at the cutting edge of technology and futurism, it can be surprising to experience how grounded the collective's practice is in the natural world, and indeed how their goal is to transcend the boundaries between humans and nature, and between oneself and the world.

The motion of hundreds of thousands of digital particles are simulated and then projected as cascades of shimmering luminescence, but to a viewer the effect is that of floating in a wave made of light. Rivers and sunbeams, a human hand applying ink to paper, the natural passing of time – these are the subjects that propel forward these pioneers of tomorrow.

The typical response to a **teamLab** experience is speechlessness, and we're thrilled to be partnering with leading gallery Tolarno, in association with Martin Browne Contemporary, Sydney to offer you the chance to lose your words – and perhaps to lose yourself – in the work of these visionaries.



## Media Release



Federation Square Wednesday 2 October, 6.30pm Free

www.festival.melbourne
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
#melbfest

AUSTRALIA // OPENING EVENT

#### **TANDERRUM**

Each year the first words of the Festival come from those who have carried this land's stories the longest—the First Peoples of Melbourne.

Tanderrum is a ceremony bringing together the Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung, Boon Wurrung, Taungurung, Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung language groups of the Eastern Kulin Nation—a ceremony of celebration that reaches across Aboriginal time.

This sacred ceremony had been hidden since European invasion, until six years ago the Eastern Kulin brought Tanderrum back to central Melbourne to open the Festival.

Since then this cross-cultural moment has become an essential and living element of the Festival and a Welcome to Country for local and international artists and audiences.

Melbourne is sacred to the Traditional Custodians. Through this event we ensure that Aboriginal culture remains present and relevant to our city today. Tanderrum is an invitation to share this sacred place.

Presenting Partners

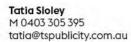




With support







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